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Army Bands

A Guide For Senior Commanders

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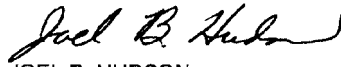
Army Bands

A Guide For Senior Commanders

By Order of the Secretary of the Army:

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department of the Army Informational Pamphlet.

Summary. This pamphlet provides a “how to” guide for senior commanders who are responsible for oversight of Army bands.

Applicability. This pamphlet applies to the Active Army, Army National Guard (ARNG), and the U.S. Army Reserve (USAR).

Proponent and exception authority. The proponent for this pamphlet is the Deputy Chief of Staff for Personnel (DCSPER). The DCSPER has the authority to approve exceptions to this pamphlet that are consistent with controlling law and regulation. The DCSPER may delegate this approval authority, in writing, to

a division chief within the proponent agency who holds the grade of colonel or the civilian equivalent.

Suggested Improvements. Users are invited to send comments and suggested improvements on DA Form 2028 (Recommended Changes to Publications and Blank Forms) directly to: HQDA Staff Bands Officer (TAPC-PDO), 200 Stovall Street, Alexandria, VA 22332-0474.

Distribution. This publication is available in electronic media only and is intended for command levels C, D, and E for Active Army, Army National Guard, and the U.S. Army Reserve.

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1. Introduction

- Why do we have Army bands and what are they supposed to do? What kinds of performances should the band be doing? Everyone wants the band — how do I get the most out of my band? Who on my staff should “book” the band? How can my staff and I ensure we aren’t breaking any regulations or laws?
- How do I balance on-post and off-post performance requests?
- How much and what sort of training does the band need?
- What kind of facilities does the band need? What kind of budget do they need?
- How can I evaluate the “health” of my band?
- What do bands do in combat?
- Where can I go for more information or assistance?

If you’ve ever worked with a band, you are all too familiar with these questions. If you’re about to take over a command that has a band you’re likely to confront these questions very soon. This pamphlet will try to give you some answers and also some ideas on ways to use your band to full advantage.

2. WHY DOES THE ARMY HAVE BANDS?

The first order establishing the Continental Army included provisions for military musicians. Throughout the more than two centuries of U.S. Army history, bands have played a variety of roles. They have served to signal commands on the battlefield, to rally the spirit of the troops, to intimidate the enemy, and to inspire Americans to support and to serve in their Army.



Figure 1. The Old Guard Fife & Drum Corps recreates the role of musicians on the 18th Century battlefield.



Figure 2. The United States Army Band entertains the troops in Europe, 1944.



Figure 3. The 1st Infantry Division Band on the march in Vietnam, 1968.

3. THE MISSION OF ARMY BANDS

a. Today's Army bands provide music to instill in our soldiers the will to fight and win, foster the support of our citizens, and promote our national interests at home and abroad. That, in a nutshell, is the mission of every Army band, from the one on The White House lawn to the one standing on your parade field.



Figure 4. The 82nd Airborne Division Band passes in review, 1999.



Figure 5. The U.S. Army Band at the White House.

b. Although Army force structures have changed, every generation of leaders has recognized the vital role bands play in the Army's mission. Bands are the most visible link with our heritage and preserve Army traditions through their performances. They are a potent asset in support of Army recruiting, and can provide a needed boost to soldier morale. The last several decades have shown Army bands are most effective when used within the context of Information Operations. From Vietnam and Operation Desert Storm, to stability and humanitarian relief operations in Haiti, the Balkans, and within the United States, bands have been invaluable in support of public affairs, civil affairs, psychological operations, and troop morale activities. Used properly, they are the commander's best way to maintain a non-threatening presence across the entire operational spectrum, from peacetime to a major armed conflict.

4. "BOOKING" THE BAND

a. Many organizations vest all tasking authority in the G3 or its equivalent. However, it's important that whatever agency is designated to book the band consider the following:

- The G1/DCFA will often have OPCON of the band or have significant input to the booking process. The important role of bands in Information Operations may make it appropriate for the G5 to exercise OPCON. In non-divisional bands, the Garrison Commander, DPTMSEC, or DCFA may exercise OPCON of the band. Frequently, command of the band for administrative and UCMJ purposes will be vested in a major subordinate command. Coordination and cooperation between the OPCON and the higher headquarters commander of the band is imperative.
- The Public Affairs Officer (PAO) should provide input on all off-post requests.
- Tactical plans involving the band should include input from the G5, the G1, and the PAO to ensure band operations are integrated into Information Operations and the band is used properly for troop morale support.
- Band commanders of all ranks have extensive training and experience in the application of laws and regulations governing bands, in how to maximize the band's productivity, and in their unit capabilities. The band commander should be permitted to provide recommendations on all requests for band support.
- It is advisable to publish a local command policy that spells out procedures and guidelines for requesting band support. A good local policy can head off problems and disputes over band requests, guard against over-commitment of the band, and ensure everyone knows what's legal and what's not. This policy should provide a "no later than" deadline for band requests. In order to permit the band to develop training schedules six weeks in advance in accordance with Army doctrine, requests should normally be submitted at least 60 days in advance.
- Some events are strictly prohibited. Examples are performances that would selectively benefit, or appear to benefit, a private organization, a commercial entity, or a particular political or religious group. AR 360-1 and AR 220-90 provide additional guidance on authorized and prohibited events. Another area to watch out for is background, dinner, or dance music off the installation. It's usually prohibited to use Army musicians to support events off the installation that put them in competition with civilian musicians. When in doubt, ask your local JAG officer or the Staff Bands Officer that supports your command.

b. Some things to look for that may call for more investigation:

- Is the event closed to the general public?
- Is there an admission charge?
- Is there a "hidden request?" An example would be a request for performance of the National Anthem where the real intent of the requestor is to get dinner music "as long as they're there."

c. These "red flags" do not by themselves indicate the request should be disapproved, but do indicate some more information should be gathered.

5. BALANCING BAND PERFORMANCES

a. Being in charge of an Army band is much like the proverbial "filling a five pound bag with ten pounds of sand." There are always many more requests for the band than can be satisfied. You must also ensure the band has enough time to conduct training and to permit a good quality of life for band members.

b. Every installation will have a different mix of on-post and off-post performances. It's helpful to view the band's mission as a three-legged stool. The legs are troop support, community/international relations, and recruiting support (U.S.-based bands only). Without close monitoring, the on-post requests will completely fill up the band's schedule. The senior Army leadership has charged each of us to help man the force by actively supporting Army recruiting and by doing everything we can to connect the Army with the American people - our real "bosses." So, how will you know when you're "out of balance?" During the summer months, most bands are kept busy supporting changes of command and the ratio of on-post to off-post performances will be as high as 95% to 5%. This should be balanced out during the non-summer months. If over an entire year your band has performed more than 70% of their musical missions (not

including funerals) on-post, you should have your staff look to ensure the band is doing enough to support Army recruiting and community relations.

6. TRAINING OF THE BAND

a. Army bands are TO&E units and their soldiers need to be trained to perform missions in garrison and on the battlefield. Your band should be conducting musical training for specific upcoming missions, musical sustainment training to maintain and enhance future capabilities, and training for tactical missions. A good rule of thumb is to ensure the band has about a 50/50 split between musical training and performance each week. When bands do nothing but perform, the performance quality will eventually degrade and they will not be able to prepare for major events. Keep in mind that bands suffer the same personnel turbulence as any other military unit and new personnel need training before being fully mission-capable. One factor making this even more of a challenge is the low density of band MOSs, several of which are “one deep.”

b. The question you’ll often be asked is, “why can’t I get the band, they aren’t doing anything that afternoon?” Training or compensatory time for one of the many evening or weekend performances are necessary uses of the band’s time, just as they would be for any of your other units. With a 60-day deadline for band requests, the band commander and your staff can usually fit in most performances and training and still ensure adequate time off.



Figure 6. 1st Cavalry Division Band soldiers conduct primary mission (musical) training, Camp McGovern, Bosnia, 1999.



Figure 7. The USAREUR Band & Chorus training on the grenade range, 2000.

7. SUPPORTING THE BAND

a. Funding support of the band is best accomplished with level and predictable budgets. Like any other unit, when subjected to “feast or famine,” the band’s mission effectiveness is reduced and they are precluded from exercising good stewardship of resources. Fortunately, there is a standard budget model for Army bands that has been validated by HQDA as part of the PPBES process. The budget model provides a good guide to what the “typical” Army band needs to perform their mission. Your band commander can adapt the model to the local situation.

b. Band training facilities present some unique challenges. Bands have many thousands of dollars of musical and electronic equipment that need to be properly stored. Most importantly, band soldiers operate in a high noise environment and proper acoustical treatment is necessary to avoid hearing loss. Your band commander can obtain detailed information to advise your staff on what’s needed in a good band training facility.



Figure 8. A view of the USAREUR Band & Chorus rehearsal hall from the recording booth.

8. HOW DO I KNOW IF MY BAND IS HEALTHY?

As an experienced leader, you can use some of the same indicators you would use for other units. Here are some other things to look for:

- How’s the reenlistment rate for the band? Do soldiers reenlist for “present duty assignment” or do they always seem to reenlist for “anywhere else?”
- How many late requests are accepted for the band? Causing frequent cancellation of planned family events can quickly sour the attitude of any soldier’s spouse.
- How does the band look and sound? Every general thinks his/her band is the best in the Army. What do those with some musical experience think?
- Request an Army Bands Technical Inspection. The technical inspection is like the band’s ARTEP. It also provides you with good advice on how best to use the band. An experienced band officer with specialized training in band operations performs the technical inspections. He/she can give you an objective evaluation of how your band is doing, how to get the most from them, and what they need for support.

9. SPECIAL ITEMS FOR RESERVE COMPONENT BANDS

Supervisors of Reserve Component (RC) bands have many of the same issues as supervisors of Active Army bands. RC bands are in great demand but the days they have available for training and performance are severely limited.

Special care must be exercised to ensure RC bands get enough time for training and to complete administrative requirements. RC bands need the opportunity to train and perform as a unit for an extended period (a full two week period) during Annual Training (AT). It's best to ensure your band gets to train and perform their mission and receive an external evaluation at least every two or three years. Your band commander and supporting Staff Bands Officer can recommend training sites so your RC band can perform for soldiers and their families, enhance community/international relations, and support recruiting during their AT.



Figure 9. 70th Army Band (USAR) passes in review during Annual Training.



Figure 10. A member of the 23rd Army Band (UTARNG) works with young musicians.

10. WHAT DO BANDS DO IN COMBAT?

The primary mission of Army bands in combat is the same as in peacetime, to perform music. Army bands are also trained to augment command post security or to augment security at EPW/CI collection points. It's important to remember that the band augments security. If they become the sole security force they won't be available for your use in Information Operations or for troop support missions. Depending upon the personnel assigned, bands can often task organize to perform multiple musical missions or to detach a musical support element, while sometimes providing limited augmentation to security forces. The band commander can advise you on the best way to use the band and explain their capabilities and limitations.



Figure 11. 1st Cavalry Division Band bringing holiday cheer to soldiers in Bosnia, December 1999.

11. WHERE CAN I GO FOR MORE INFORMATION OR HELP?

- AR 220-90, Army Bands, provides regulatory guidance on bands. AR 360-1, The Army Public Affairs Program, provides guidance on the Army's community relations policies.
- FM 12-50, U.S. Army Bands, is the doctrinal guide for use of bands in peace and in war.
- FM 3-0, Operations, and FM 4-0, Combat Service Support, provide some "bigger picture" perspectives on what bands can and should do in support of operations.
- Staff Bands Officers are stationed at some MACOMs and at the Department of the Army. They are your subject matter experts in band matters. Your band commander can provide you with contact information.

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